



WASHINGTON COUNTY
WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

For Immediate Release
May 10, 2016

Contact: Karry Rathje
Public Information Manager
435.668.5622
krathje@wcwcd.utah.gov

**WASHINGTON COUNTY MAKES COUNTY-WIDE COMMITMENT TO H2OATH;
LEADS STATE IN CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Washington County Water Conservancy District, a partner in the Utah Division of Water Resources' H2Oath pledge campaign, secured signatures from local county commissioners and mayors in support of the water conservation initiative and are now encouraging the public to participate by signing the same pledge available online at water.utah.gov/H2Oath.

"We are excited to see Washington County kick off this campaign with tremendous support from their elected leaders," said Eric Millis, director of the Utah Division of Water Resources. "The county has been on the forefront of various conservation initiatives, and that continues with their proactive support of this effort."

Washington County Water Conservancy District was the first district in the state of Utah to adopt a water conservation plan; open a desert conservation garden, Red Hills Desert Garden; eliminate traditional "take or pay" municipal water contracts and regionalize its water system to encourage conservation and one of the first counties to meet Governor Gary Herbert's request to reduce water use 25 percent by 2025.

"Washington County has experienced tremendous growth with a limited water supply that has required creative and collaborative solutions," said Ron Thompson, general manager of Washington County Water Conservancy District.

During the last two decades, the district and its municipal partners have invested millions of dollars annually into conservation initiatives. Efforts include, but are not limited to, converting 1,350,000 feet of open canals to pipelines, repairing leaking pipes, installing meters, developing two water conservation demonstration gardens, overseeing annual Water Fairs for more than 40,000 students, hosting more than 200 free community events and performing more than 2,000 free irrigation audits.

The district launched its rebate program in 2005 and has distributed nearly \$1 million to local businesses and residents who have installed water efficient irrigation systems, plumbing fixtures and commercial equipment.

(more)

WATER DISTRICT – P. 2

In addition, the district requires its municipal partners have a conservation plan, a tiered conservation rate structure, landscaping ordinances and time of day watering ordinances to purchase water from the district through its Regional Water Supply Agreement.

The collective efforts of the district and its municipal partners have resulted in tremendous water use reductions. According to the Utah Division of Water Resources, residential water use in the Kanab Creek/Virgin River Basin (primarily located in Washington and Kane counties) is among the lowest in the state.

“A tremendous amount of work and resources have been dedicated to achieve these conservation accomplishments,” said Thompson. “It hasn’t been easy or cheap, but the results have been well worth the effort.”

Washington County and its municipal partners remain committed to continued and more aggressive conservation efforts recognizing that further reductions, in addition to what has already been achieved, will be more difficult and expensive to accomplish.

“Further reductions will require greater public support,” said Karry Rathje, public information manager for Washington County Water Conservancy District. “We need conservation-minded residents to help us achieve the next milestones and implement the practices outlined in the H2Oath. Conservation is a shared responsibility.”

About the H2Oath

Utah Division of Water Resources launched “H2Oath: Utah’s Water-wise Pledge” to encourage additional water conservation efforts by families, businesses, government agencies and statewide organizations on May 10, 2016. The H2Oath is designed to commit individuals and groups to conserve more by following the division’s Weekly Lawn Watering Guide throughout the watering season, and making several other water conservation commitments.

Campaign supporters include the state’s four largest water conservancy districts (Central Utah, Jordan Valley, Weber Basin and Washington County), University of Utah, Trout Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy. More information is available online at water.utah.gov/H2Oath.

About Washington County Water Conservancy District

Washington County Water Conservancy District, a not-for-profit public agency, was established in 1962 to manage Southern Utah’s regional water needs. The district oversees the development, stabilization, management, acquisition and conservation of water resources in Washington County in an ongoing effort to provide a safe, sustainable water supply for current and future generations. Visit www.wcwcd.org for more information.



Photo Caption: Washington County kicks off the H2Oath campaign with tremendous support from the water district and local elected officials. From left to right (back row) is Ivins Mayor Chris Hart, Leeds Mayor Wayne Peterson, La Verkin Mayor Kerry Gubler, WCWCD Board Chairman Ed Bowler and WCWCD General Manager Ron Thompson; (front row) Virgin Mayor Bruce Densley, St. George Mayor Jon Pike, Washington Mayor Ken Neilson, Hurricane Mayor John Bramall, County Commissioner Chairman Alan Gardener, County Commissioner Zach Renstrom, Apple Valley Mayor Rick Moser and Santa Clara Mayor Rick Rosenberg.